

What Is Claimed Is:

1. A method for monitoring a status of mail communications created by a large scale document production and management process, the production and management process including a plurality of stages selected from the following group: utilizing a print stream to generate documents, printing documents on a printer in accordance with the print stream, forming completed mail pieces on an inserter from the printed documents in accordance with mail piece creation data files, sorting the completed mail pieces on an outgoing sorter in accordance with carrier service specifications, delivering the completed mail pieces to a recipient by a carrier service, delivering a response mail piece from the recipient by the carrier service, and sorting the response mail piece at an incoming sorter; the method comprising:

specifying a non-recurring mail piece identifier for a particular mail piece;

including separate communications to separate individual recipients at a given delivery address in the particular mail piece;

specifying non-recurring communication identifiers for each communication included with the particular mail piece;

relating the mail piece identifier and communication identifiers;

monitoring status of the particular mail piece; and

reporting on a status of the individual communication based on a monitored status of the related mail piece.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of reporting further comprises displaying processing information for the individual communication wherein the displayed processing information includes a visual reproduction of the individual communication generated based on data from the print stream.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of reporting further comprises the step of displaying processing information for the individual communication wherein the displayed processing information includes a visual reproduction of the individual communication based on a camera image of the communication captured during processing.

4. The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

storing data relating to the individual communications in an individual communication data file separate from the mail piece creation data file, the individual communications data file including at least the non-recurring communication identifier, the corresponding mail piece identifier, and some descriptive information about the individual communication; and

storing the mail piece identifier in the mail piece creation data file.

5. A method for monitoring status of mail communications created by a large scale document production and management process, the method comprising:

utilizing a print stream to generate individual communications;

associating a communication identifier with each communication;

printing documents on a printer in accordance with the print stream;

providing document printing status data to a lifecycle monitoring computer;

forming completed mail pieces on an inserter from the printed documents in accordance with mail piece creation data files, at least some of the completed mail pieces including more than one individual communications per envelope sent to a particular address;

associating a mail piece identifier with each mail piece in the mail piece creation data files;

associating each communication identifier with a corresponding mail piece identifier;

providing mail piece formation status data and associated document identifier data from the inserter to the lifecycle monitoring computer,

sorting the completed mail pieces on an outgoing sorter;

providing outgoing sorting data and associated document identifier data to the lifecycle monitoring computer;

delivering finished sorted mail pieces to a carrier service, the carrier service providing mail piece tracking data;

collecting carrier service tracking data for mail pieces and reply documents handled by the carrier service;

providing the collected carrier service tracking data to the lifecycle monitoring computer;

receiving returned reply documents at an incoming sorter and scanning the returned reply documents and identifying the corresponding communication identifier;

providing the incoming sorter status data and communication identifier scanning data to the lifecycle monitoring computer; and

reporting status of individual communication during one or more of the preceding steps of this method, the status based on information provided to the lifecycle monitoring computer and the relationship between the communication identifier and the mail piece identifier.

6. A method for monitoring status of communications created by a large scale document production and management process, the production and management process including a plurality of stages selected from the following group: utilizing a print stream to generate documents, printing the documents on a printer in accordance with the print stream, forming completed mail pieces on an inserter from the printed documents in accordance with mail piece creation data files, sorting the completed mail pieces on an outgoing sorter in accordance with carrier service specifications, delivering the completed mail pieces to a recipient by a carrier service, delivering a response mail piece from the recipient by the carrier service, and sorting the response mail piece at an incoming sorter, the method comprising:

specifying a non-recurring mail piece identifier for a particular mail piece;

including separate communications to separate individual recipients at a given delivery address in the particular mail piece;

specifying non-recurring communication identifiers for each communication included with the particular mail piece;

relating the mail piece identifier and communication identifiers;

storing records relating to individual mail pieces processed by the document production and management process, each record being identified by a mail piece identifier;

storing records relating to individual communications included in the mail pieces, each record being identified by a communication identifier;

monitoring the status of the individual mail pieces during a plurality of stages in the document production and management process;

relating the monitored status of individual mail pieces to the mail piece identifier;

relating the monitored status of individual mail pieces to corresponding communication identifiers;

updating the mail piece records to indicate the monitored status of individual documents throughout the document production and management process;

updating the individual communication records to indicate the monitored status of individual communications throughout the document production and management process; and

displaying the status of one or more individual mail pieces and individual communications during the document production and management process based on the updated stored records.

7. The method of claim 6 wherein the step of displaying the status of one or more individual mail pieces and individual communications includes providing color coded

graphical representations of documents, the color coded representations indicating status conditions as different colors.